

## **Opponents against mining stand firm - Goliad County protesters gain support against uranium mining**

Victoria Advocate, 09/27/07

<http://www.thevictoriaadvocate.com/428/story/128190.html>

BY SONNY LONG - VICTORIA ADVOCATE

ANDER - Beneath a canopy of towering oak trees, opponents of uranium mining in Goliad County stated their case and dug in their heels.

Goliad Economic Development Coordinator Sandra Lewis said the fight against the mining operation is not just a local issue.

"This is not just a Goliad County issue. It's much bigger than that," she said. "It's here and it's right now, but this is just where it's starting. They have the money to fight us. But we're prepared, and we're going to stand our ground."

The county commissioners court has appropriated \$150,000 in next year's budget for legal expenses related to uranium mining, County Judge Harold Gleinser said. An additional \$39,000 from the current budget would also be rolled over for that purpose.

On Wednesday afternoon, the county officials, members of the county's Uranium Research and Advisory Committee, representatives from Sierra Club chapters in Austin and Corpus Christi, and the media attended a press conference off Bluntzer Road near the uranium exploration area.

"This is what it's all about. We have to do what we have to do to protect our property," said the county judge, pointing out the pristine setting that included a plush tree line along nearby Coleta Creek.

Uranium Energy Corporation began drilling test wells in Goliad County in May 2006 and confirmed the presence of uranium.

But the county has formally requested a hearing before the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to contest the permit application. The permitting process can take up to one year.

Testing in the 1980s revealed about 5.2 million pounds of uranium in Goliad County, Estimates are that the project area could hold 10 to 15 million pounds, according to the uranium mining company.

Uranium is currently selling for about \$85-\$90 per pound.

The citizens' group Uranium Information at Goliad are also sponsoring a letter writing campaign, urging citizens to write a letter to the commission requesting a contested hearing on the permit application.

Art Dohmann, president of the Goliad County Groundwater Conservation District and the advisory committee chairman, detailed the two groups' involvement in seeking information and research during the past several months.

"Our groundwater is the lifeblood of Goliad County," he said. "It is vital that we protect our water. In our judgment, in-situ leach mining cannot be done safely in Goliad County."

Three landowners who live near the uranium exploration area also shared their experiences with dirty water while bore holes were drilled near their homes.

Mary Anklam, and her husband Tony raises Boer goats in Weser - adjacent to the proposed mine site. They have begun to lose sales because people fear her animals are contaminated due to the uranium exploration, she said.

Anklam held a bottle of murky water and a water filter, dirtied during the drilling of bore holes near her property.

"This is only from the exploration. What is going to happen when they start mining?" Anklam asked.

Rita Brown, another landowner, said they had red slime in their coffee maker during nearby borehole drilling. The Browns have lived on property on Farm-to-Market Road 1961 for 25 years and "this had never happened before."

"But since they discontinued bore holing in that area, our water has started to clear up," Brown said.

Luann Duderstadt, whose property is one of the closest to the uranium exploration area, also showed samples of dirty filters and dirty water from their third generation homestead.

"We never experienced any problems with our water until the exploration," she said. Her family now purchases drinking water.

Dohmann said the filter manufacturer has been contacted and indicated the red slime appearing on the filters is iron bacteria. Dohmann also said the Railroad Commission was asked to investigate the cause but it offered no satisfactory answers, citing the change from drought conditions to extremely wet conditions.

"So, we're on our own," said Dohmann.

To help get their message out, a group of concerned citizens have rented the digital billboard at the corner of Navarro and Mockingbird Streets in Victoria with the message, "Stop Goliad Uranium Mining."